

Application No. 10/761,054

PATENT
Docket No.: 14254-43623Remarks

Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration in view of the herewith presented amendments and remarks.

Claims 1–25 are pending in the instant application. The allowance of claims 18–25 is noted with appreciation. Claims 1–5, 8–11, and 15–17 have been rejected. Claims 6, 7, and 12–14 have been objected to but indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 1, 9, and 16 have been amended to clarify the subject matter claimed. Claim 18 has been amended to correct a minor grammatical error. New claims 26–35 present the subject matter of the objected-to claims in independent form. New claims 36–38 are presented for entry and consideration.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(e)

Claims 9–11 and 15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by *Huang* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,523,978). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration of this rejection in light of the amendments to claim 9.

Huang describes a lamp bulb with stretchable lamp beads therein. The bulb comprises a glass lamp bulb 20, with a metallic cap 30, having a core column 40 that partially extends into the lamp bulb and a plurality of internally stretching miniature lamp beads or LEDs 60 therein. See, Col. 2, lines 36–42. The *Huang* patent describes an elastic frame 50 containing the LEDs 60 and connected to the core column 40. See Col. 2, lines 39–42. *Huang* also teaches that one end of the glass lamp bulb has a reduced neck 2 as an opening 24. See Col. 2, lines 62–65. The elastic frame 50 shown in *Huang* “can be forcibly folded into a strip of a smaller width together with its [LEDs] 60, so that it can be placed together with the [LEDs] 60 into the glass lamp bulb 20, till a positioning flange 43 of the core column 40 is abutted against the edge of the opening 24.” Col. 2, lines 65–67 through Col. 3, lines 1–4.

Application No. 10/761,054

PATENT
Docket No.: 14254-46623

With all due respect, the Examiner fails to point out a "wiring assembly" in the *Huang* reference – there is none present. The Examiner fails to show a wiring assembly in *Huang* with a first end connected to a male insert and a second end connected to a lighting assembly.

In order to clarify the claimed subject matter, claim 9 has been amended to recite a decorative illuminated article for use in connecting to a pre-existing socket of a lighting string comprising a plurality of sockets that hold decorative light bulbs. The article includes a wiring assembly including a length of wire having a first end and a second end, the first end connected to a male insert configured for insertion into one of the pre-existing sockets of the lighting string, the second end connected to a lighting assembly. Such an arrangement is not disclosed, taught, or suggested in *Huang*. Further, the claim has been amended to recite a hollow enclosure including a decorative element contained therein and a neck having an opening sized to receive the lighting assembly in a position to illuminate the decorative element.

There is no configuration for inserting into to a pre-existing socket of a lighting string in *Huang*, no decorative element in the hollow enclosure, and no positioning of the lighting assembly to illuminate the decorative element (as no such element is present). Thus, claim 9, as amended, is not anticipated by *Huang*.

The Examiner characterized the end of the positioning flange of *Huang* as a male insert according to the invention in claim 9. This is an improper interpretation of the *Huang* patent. The screw-in lamp bulb of *Huang* is not adaptable for use in a lighting string. Specifically, *Huang* does not teach or disclose a male insert that is adapted for insertion into a socket of a lighting string. Rather, the positioning flange shown in *Huang* is part of the core column, and the positioning flange is abutted against the edge of the opening of the bulb so that the elastic frame and LEDs can stretch out elastically per its own nature into a predetermined shape in the lamp bulb. See Col. 3, lines, 3–8. The positioning flange of *Huang* is not adapted for insertion into a socket of a lighting string.

The Examiner characterized the glass lamp bulb of *Huang* as a hollow enclosure according to claim 9 of the present application. *Huang* shows a screw-in lamp bulb, not a

Application No. 10/761,054

PATENT

Docket No.: 14254-41623

hollow enclosure with a decorative element contained therein. The Examiner characterizes the elastic frame 50 with the LEDs 60 of *Huang* as the decorative element contained in the hollow enclosure because the elastic element is meant to form decorative shapes. However, the decorative element of claim 9 is part of the hollow enclosure not part of the lighting assembly that is received by the hollow enclosure.

The Examiner further characterized the elastic frame containing LEDs of the *Huang* references as a lighting assembly of claim 9 of the present application. The amendments of claim 9 distinguish the "lighting assembly" of *Huang* (i.e., elastic frame with LEDs) from the present invention. The lighting assembly of claim 9 illuminates the decorative element contained within the hollow enclosure. This differs from the configuration shown in *Huang*. The Examiner characterized the lighting assembly of *Huang* as a decorative element in a hollow enclosure. In claim 9, the decorative element and the lighting assembly are separate elements, and the lighting assembly illuminates the decorative element.

The Examiner characterized the reduced neck 22 of the lamp bulb of *Huang* as a collar, which is slidably positioned between the first end and the second end of a wiring assembly, having a hole through which the wire is inserted. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's characterization of the *Huang* reference. In claim 9, the collar is independent from the hollow enclosure. As stated by the Examiner, the collar of claim 9 is generally adapted to receive the neck of the hollow enclosure. The collar and the hollow enclosure are separate elements. *Huang* does not teach or suggest a collar that is independent of a hollow enclosure and generally adapted to receive the neck of a hollow enclosure. *Huang* also fails to teach a collar having a hole through which the wire of a wiring assembly is inserted. Furthermore, the Examiner fails to show a wiring assembly with a first end and a second end in *Huang*.

The Examiner characterized the metallic cap of the *Huang* lamp bulb as a threaded gasket positioned around the neck of the hollow enclosure. The applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's broad interpretation of the *Huang* reference. In claim 9, the threaded gasket is part of the neck of the hollow enclosure. *Huang* does not

Application No. 10/761,054

PATENT
Docket No.: 14254-43623

teach or suggest a threaded gasket positioned around the neck of a hollow enclosure. Rather, *Huang* teaches a metallic cap that is mounted on the end of the lamp bulb. See Col. 2, lines 35-37. The metallic cap of *Huang* is not positioned on a hollow enclosure as taught by the invention of claim 9.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that claim 9, as amended, and claims 10-11 and 15, are not anticipated by *Huang* because *Huang* does not disclose, teach, or suggest the claimed invention, nor provides the requisite teachings. Therefore, applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 1-5 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Huang* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,523,978) in view of *Blanton* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,109,765). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons discussed above in connection with claims 9-11 and 15. Applicant also traverses this rejection for the following reasons.

In making this rejection, the Examiner characterized one of the flexible guide posts of *Huang* as a wiring assembly according to the invention in claim 1 of the present application. *Huang* describes a core column 40 "provided with two flexible guide posts, 41, 42 with their ends connecting with a flexible elastic frame 50 [connected with a plurality of LEDs] by means of conductors at two connecting points chosen on the elastic frame 50 which renders the elastic frame to be elastically stretched per its own nature." Col. 2, lines 44-50. Claim 1, as amended, recites a first end of the wiring assembly attached to a male insert and the second end of the wiring assembly attached to a lighting assembly. *Huang* does not teach or suggest this. As discussed above, the Examiner's characterization of the positioning flange of the *Huang* reference as a male insert is incorrect. The male insert of the present invention is configured for insertion into a socket of a lighting string. *Huang* does not teach or suggest a male insert configured for insertion into a socket of a lighting string.

Application No. 10/761,054

PATENT
Docket No.: 14254-43623

Furthermore, the Examiner's characterization of the hollow enclosure including a decorative element is misplaced. The Examiner describes the wiring 60 (i.e., LEDs) of *Huang* as a decorative element since the "wiring 60 is meant to elastically form decorative shapes." The Examiner also characterizes the wiring 60 of *Huang* as part of a lighting assembly according to the present invention. In claim 1 of the present application, the lighting assembly and the decorative element of the hollow enclosure are separate elements. Moreover, the lighting assembly of the present invention illuminates the decorative element contained within the hollow enclosure. *Huang* does not teach or suggest a lighting assembly that illuminates a decorative element within a hollow enclosure.

The Examiner states that "it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the teaching of a bulb holding clip as taught by *Blanton* in the device of *Huang* for the purpose of providing a means for holding a bulb to a desired location." *Blanton* shows "a variable-position decorative light mounting system for mounting the bulb and socket assemblies of a string of decorative lights at selective positions to achieve decorative effects." See Abstract.

In traverse, it is shown that *Blanton* does not teach or suggest a clip attached to a wiring assembly for receiving a light bulb from a lighting string according to claim 1 of the present application. Claim 1, as amended, relates to a decorative illuminated article for use in connecting to a pre-existing socket of a lighting string comprising a plurality of sockets that hold decorative light bulbs. It is well known that when a light bulb is removed from the socket of such lighting strings, the series electrical connection within the lighting string is broken and the electrical current to all of the light bulbs is broken. Once the male insert of the present invention is inserted into the empty socket of the lighting string, the series connection is reestablished, thereby restoring the electrical current to each of the bulbs.

If a user chooses to discontinue use of the claimed decorative illuminated article of the present invention with a lighting string, the user must reinsert a light bulb into the lighting string in order for the lighting string to operate. The object of the clip of the

Application No. 10/761,054

PATENT
Docket No.: 14254-43623

present invention is to keep the original light bulb from the lighting string in close proximity to the lighting string while the decorative illuminated article of the present invention is being used.

The light mounting system of *Blanton* relates to a variable position decorative light mounting system, not a light bulb from a lighting string. The system disclosed in *Blanton* slides along a track and its purpose is to hold an assembly of light bulbs already mounted in a string, not just a single bulb. Furthermore, the system in *Blanton* is for mounting the bulb and socket assemblies of a lighting string. The clip taught by the invention of claim 1 of the present application is for receiving a light bulb only, not a light bulb already inserted into a socket of a lighting string. In the present invention, a light bulb is removed from the socket of a lighting string so that the male insert of the wiring assembly can be inserted into the socket of the lighting string. The light bulb that has been removed from the lighting string is thereby held in a clip that is attached to the wire of the wiring assembly.

Accordingly, *Blanton* fails to disclose, teach or suggest a light mounting system for attaching a single light bulb that has been removed from a socket of a lighting string, as recited in claim 1, as amended. Therefore, claim 1 and its respective dependent claims are not rendered obvious in view of *Huang* or *Blanton*, taken singularly or in combination, because neither patent discloses, teaches, or suggests the claimed invention, nor provides the requisite teachings. For these reasons, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103.

Claims 16 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Lee* (U.S. Pat. No. 5,964,520) and further in view of *Yen* (U.S. Pat. No. 5,599,092). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

In presenting this rejection, the Examiner characterized the insulated electrical wire forming the lighting string of *Lee* as a wiring assembly according to claim 16 of the present application. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's characterization. *Lee* describes a string of miniature Christmas tree lights for use outdoors with structural features to obviate short-circuiting in its outdoor use as might be

Application No. 10/761,054

PATENT
Docket No.: 14254-43523

caused by rain and snow. *See* Col. 1, lines 5–11. *Lee* does not teach or suggest a wiring assembly with a first end connected to a male insert configured for insertion into one of the pre-existing sockets of the lighting string and a second end connected to a lighting assembly. The “wiring assembly” in *Lee* is simply the lighting string. The invention of claim 16 of the present application teaches a wiring assembly that is separate from a lighting string. The wiring assembly of claim 16 is for use with a lighting string, not the lighting string itself.

The Examiner also states “a second end as shown in figure 5 is connected to the lighting assembly as well as the male insert, but is nonetheless connected to the lighting assembly.” The applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner’s equating of *Lee* to the invention of claim 16. The lighting assembly of claim 16 of the present application is connected to the second end of the wiring assembly, not the first end where the male insert is positioned. Furthermore, the lighting assembly of the present invention illuminates a decorative element within a hollow enclosure. The Examiner concedes that *Lee* does not teach or suggest a hollow enclosure. Thus, *Lee* does not teach or suggest a lighting assembly for illuminating a decorative element within a hollow enclosure.

The Examiner characterizes the positive and negative electrical contacts of the socket of the Christmas tree lights of *Lee* as the resilient tabs described in claim 16 of the present application. The applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner’s characterization. As amended, claim 16 is distinguishable from the *Lee* reference. The resilient tabs of the present invention enable the male insert of the present invention to fit inside various standard lighting string sockets. *Lee* does not teach or suggest a wiring assembly with a first end and a second end, the first end connected to a male insert configured for insertion into one of the pre-existing sockets of the lighting string and having resilient tabs enabling the male insert to fit inside various standard lighting string sockets and the second end connected to a lighting assembly. The *Lee* reference merely discloses a string of Christmas tree lights configured to obviate short-circuiting of the positive and negative electrical contacts within the socket.

Application No. 10/761,054

PATENT
Docket No.: 14254-43623

The Examiner states that "[i]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to implement the teaching of a decorative hollow body as taught by *Yen* over the lighting device of *Lee* for the purpose of providing *Lee* with a decorative device adaptable for use with a light string." *Yen* teaches a hanging decoration lamp with scenery disposed inside a transparent shell. See Abstract. The transparent shell comprises a lid with a bulb fixing mount wherein a bulb taken from one of a string of decoration bulbs is threadably engaged with the lid. See Col. 2, lines 1-7. *Yen* does not teach or describe a hollow enclosure having a neck with an opening sized to receive a lighting assembly that is attached to the second end of a wiring assembly, and that in turn is configured for insertion into a pre-existing socket of a lighting string. The transparent shell of *Yen* receives a bulb from a lighting string rather than receiving a lighting assembly that is attached to a wiring assembly that has a first end connected to a male insert that is adapted for insertion into a socket of a lighting string.

Lee and *Yen* both fail to teach or suggest a decorative illuminated article adapted for use with a lighting string as taught by claim 16, as amended. *Lee* and *Yen* fail to disclose, singularly or in combination, a wiring assembly with a first end connected to a male insert configured for insertion into one of the pre-existing sockets of the lighting string and a second end connected to a lighting assembly that is received by a hollow enclosure. Therefore, the instant claims are not rendered obvious in view of *Lee* or *Yen*, taken singularly or in combination, because neither patent discloses, teaches, or suggests the claimed invention, nor provides the requisite teachings. For these reasons, applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103.

Objections to Claims

Claims 6, 7, and 12-14 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. In response to the Examiner's suggestion, these claims have been rewritten in independent form as Claims 26, 28, and 30, and 33, respectively, and include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants submit that the rewritten claims are in proper form for allowance.

Application No. 10/761,054

PATENT

Docket No.: 14254-43623

Claims 27, 29, 31, 32, 34, and 35 are dependent claims under their respective new independent claims, and should be allowable.

New independent claim 36 is presented for entry and should be allowable. This claim presents a combination of elements of wiring assembly, hollow enclosure including a decorative element, a collar, and a clip removably attached to the wire for receiving a light bulb from a wiring string.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1, 9, and 16, as amended, and their respective dependent claims, are novel, and are non-obvious in view of the references and should be allowable. Furthermore, the applicants submit that claims 6, 7, and 12-14 as rewritten are in proper form for allowance. Further still, applicants submit that new claims 26-38 should also be allowable.

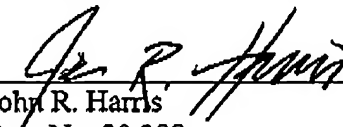
The foregoing is presented as a full and complete response to the Office Action mailed June 1, 2005, and is believed to have placed all claims in condition for allowance. Such action is courteously solicited. If any issues remain that can be solved by telephone, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at 404-233-7000.

Respectfully submitted,

MORRIS, MANNING & MARTIN, LLP

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Morris, Manning & Martin, L.L.P.
1600 Atlanta Financial Center
3343 Peachtree Road, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30326
404 405 7720 Direct
404 233 7000 Main


John R. Harris
Reg. No. 30,388
Attorney for applicants

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